

~~INFORMATION REPORT~~

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COUNTRY Ecuador

DATE DISTR. 23 MAY 1949

SUBJECT PCE Search for Underground Headquarters

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SUPPLEMENT TO  
REPORT NO.

1. It has been ascertained that the Central Committee of the Partido Comunista del Ecuador (PCE) has been studying ways of providing for the welfare of Party members in case of an emergency. The Committee has decided on the plan for a secret hiding place in order to protect the leaders and to maintain control of the Party while in an underground status. Accordingly, the Committee commissioned several agents to make a survey of the Guarumus-Santa Helena area in the Province of Pichincha. This survey has been completed and reviewed by the Committee. Its decision, although not final, was very favorable of this location, and it was decided that more definite steps would be taken towards establishment of an "underground" quarters once the rainy season was over.

2. The investigators reported that the distances between the towns en route were as follows:

Nono - Guarumus	17 kilometers
Guarumus - Tandayapa	12 "
Tandayapa - Los Puentes	15 "
Los Puentes - Manegal Chico	5 "
Manegal Chico - Santa Helena	12 "
Total of	61 "

3. The road between Nono and Guarumus is suitable for motor traffic. Two buses were found to be in daily service between Quito and Guarumus. One bus belongs to a Sr. Romero, who resides in Nono, and the second bus is owned and operated by a Sr. Ramirez of Quito. The buses leave Quito about noon and arrive in Guarumus about 3:00 p.m. the same day.

4. From Guarumus to Santa Helena, it is necessary to walk about 44 kilometers. The road is actually a narrow path which goes across rivers and along numerous precipices. The rivers were all fordable on foot. This path was considered very dangerous even on foot during the rainy season and is used almost exclusively by "arrieros", who carry their cargo on steers to and from Guarumus, Santa Helena, Gualaes, and Pacto.

5. It was determined that the two bus operators on the above route were not Party members and accordingly would not be available for liaison purposes. In

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view of this, it was recommended that the Party consider buying a bus and putting it on this run in order to provide a safe means of carrying messages back and forth. It was estimated that this bus would be able to operate in such a manner that it would not only meet its expenses but would actually show a profit within a reasonable length of time, as it would be able to carry passengers and freight both ways. If one of the "arrieros" (cargo carriers with steers) could be trusted or a Party member placed in such status, then a means could be provided for a daily courier to carry messages from the bus operator in Guarumus to Tandayapa. In this manner communications could be established between Quito and the "hideout" in five hours on a daily basis, if necessary.

6. The investigators found that it would be useless and inefficient to establish quarters at any place below Tandayapa, as the latter location offers a road, healthy climate, and fairly rapid means of communications. Tandayapa is about 1700 meters above sea level, and its only inhabitants at the moment consist of a family named Arias. It was the investigator's opinion that the Party members could establish themselves under the pretext of agricultural colonists and that the land, which is apparently abandoned, would be very productive.
7. There are no police or civil authorities between Kono and Tandayapa. The only known means of penetrating the area is the single path mentioned above, between Guarumus and Tandayapa, which would enable the Party to receive advance warning of the approach of any suspicious persons. Party members based in Tandayapa could be supplied daily by means of the bus and "arrieros" in addition to what it could obtain from the land and poultry raising.
8. Regarding the Party's directive in respect to a means of communications between the Coastal and Sierra Regions, the investigators were unable to discover any practical means of establishing contact between Tandayapa and Esmeraldas, which was the desired point of contact on the coast. They therefore recommended that liaison with the Coastal Party be arranged through Quito. The Party specifically expressed the point that mechanical or electrical means of communication not be considered in making the above survey, although it was evident that radio communications could readily be established between Tandayapa and a coastal point by using hand generators. The latter point was discussed with the Party and mention was made that such communications would also make it possible to do away with the overland system as described above. However, the Party is not known at this time to be contemplating the use of a clandestine radio in its underground operations.
9. In addition to the above-mentioned survey, the Central Committee decided that a similar survey should be made of the Santo Domingo de los Colorados area in order to compare the advantages offered by the respective locations.

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